**What Must I Do To Be Saved?**

*by W. Curtis Porter*

A more important question was never framed by the trembling lips of mortal man than the question that I am to consider. It is one that concerns the deathless soul of every responsible human being in the world today. Can you even begin to imagine a question that is more momentous than the question, "What must I do to be saved?"

Upon the correct and scriptural answer to this question is suspended the destiny of the entire world of intelligent and responsible creatures. And where the destiny of the soul is involved, we ought to be very careful in the course that we pursue. We should strive sincerely to know the truth, and when we have found it, we should be equally sincere in our obedience to it.

There is just one reliable source from which to obtain the necessary information. The opinions and speculations of uninspired men will not do, but we must let the question be answered in the language of inspired literature as recorded in the gospel of Jesus Christ. There are many things that enter into the salvation of man, as the love of God, the death and blood of Jesus, and the grace of the Heavenly Father. But these are the things that pertain to the divine side of salvation and are not concerned in the actual study of our question. Certainly, no one can be saved without them, but the question of our study pertains to the human side — what man must do.

In the gospel dispensation of the world we have the question recorded three times in divine history. In each case, we have the record in the fifth book of the New Testament — the book of Acts. To its inspired history, I now invite your attention that we may find the question answered in the words of men who acted under the direct supervision of the Holy Spirit.

**The Question of the Jailer**

Reference here is made to the jailer of the city of Philippi. Paul and Silas were preaching in this city, as you will find recorded in Acts 16, and they were arrested upon the false charge of disturbing the peace of the city. When they were placed in prison, the jailer received a charge to keep them safely; and having received such a charge, he put them in the inner cell and made their feet fast in the stocks.

But at midnight, they prayed and sang praises to God. A great earthquake followed, in which the foundation of the prison was shaken, the doors opened, and all the prisoners loosed from their chains. The jailer awoke from his sleep, saw the prison doors open, supposed his prisoners had escaped, and decided that rather than face the Roman court on the charge of allowing the prisoners to escape, he would take his own life.

As he was about to do this, Paul secured his attention and prevented the act. The jailer came in trembling and fell down before Paul and Silas. Some might think this was a good position in which to be saved, but he did not stay down. Instead, as the record informs us, he brought them out, and said, "Sirs, what must I do to be saved?" (Acts 16:30).

The words of the Philippian jailer are, therefore, the words of my subject. Inspired men are present to answer the question. We are not left to guess about the matter, for they gave an answer to the question. "And they said, Believe on the Lord Jesus Christ, and thou shalt be saved, and thy house." (Acts 16:31).

From this answer we learn that man cannot be saved without faith in the Lord Jesus Christ. If he would be saved, he must believe on the Lord. Such information we are many times given in the pages of the New Testament. Jesus said unless men believe that He is the Christ, they will die in their sins and cannot go where He has gone (Jn. 8:21, 24). And in Hebrews 11:6, we are informed that men cannot come to God or please Him without faith. That principle is, therefore, found in the answer given to the jailer at Philippi.

But the trouble with many people is that they assume the jailer was told to "believe only, and thou shalt be saved." That, however, is the very thing he was not told. The inspired men said to "believe," but they did not say to "believe only." The Bible really tells us that "faith only" will not save (Jas. 2:24). But modern preachers stop right here in the divine record and tell their hearers that the only thing the jailer had to do was to believe. Why not read the rest of the record?

Verse 32 says, "And they spake unto him the word of the Lord, and to all that were in his house." If they had already told him all there was for him to do, why did they further preach to him the word of the Lord?. When they preached to him the word of the Lord, they told him something else to do, for following that preaching, we read, "And he took them the same hour of the night, and washed their stripes; and was baptized, he and all his, straightway." (Acts 16:33). Unless Paul commanded this also, how did the jailer know anything about it? And unless it was likewise important, why attend to it at the same hour of the night? Why not postpone it till later?

**The Question of the Pentecostians**

In Acts 2, the question of our subject is again asked. This time it is asked by the Jews in Jerusalem on the day of Pentecost. Peter had just convinced them that the Jesus whom they had crucified had been made both Lord and Christ, and the record says, "Now when they heard this, they were pricked in their heart, and said unto Peter and to the rest of the apostles, Men and brethren, what shall we do?" (v. 37). They knew they stood condemned before the God of heaven for crucifying the Son of God. They were lost, and they knew they were lost. They did not ask what to do because they were already saved, but they wanted to be saved from divine condemnation, and they asked, "Men and brethren, what shall we do?" Peter was inspired by the Holy Spirit and was qualified to give them a correct answer to their question. But what was his reply? "Then Peter said unto them, Repent, and be baptized every one of you in the name of Jesus Christ for the remission of sins, and ye shall receive the gift of the Holy Ghost." (v. 38). He did not tell them to believe, for they had already done that. Yet he knew they were not saved, and told them something that they must do to be saved. He said, "Repent, and be baptized.' That they could not be saved without repentance goes without question, but he did not say for them to "repent only." He told them to "repent, and" do something else — "repent and be baptized."

Just as surely as Peter was guided by the Holy Spirit, the people on the day of Pentecost had to repent and be baptized in order to be saved. If any man has a right to strike "be baptized" out of this answer, why would not some other man have a right to strike "repent" out of it? An inspired man put both of them in the answer, and no uninspired man can take either of them out. Then, too, Peter actually said to be baptized "for the remission of sins," which makes remission the object of baptism.

**The Question of Saul**

This important question is recorded in the book of Acts in connection with the conversion of one other man — Saul of Tarsus. You will find the incident mentioned in Acts 9, 22, 26. Saul was on his way to Damascus to persecute Christians when the Lord in the glory of a great light appeared to him and convinced him that he was Jesus of Nazareth. Saul inquired, "Lord, what wilt thou have me to do?" (Acts 9:6). The information was not given, but the Lord said, "Arise, and go into the city, and it shall be told thee what thou must do." Whatever may be told him in Damascus will be something that he "must do." The word "must" shows the importance of the information that would be given him. It was not to be something that he might leave undone without danger, but it was to be something that he must do.

Ananias was sent to him to tell him what he wanted to know and when he arrived, he found Saul praying. But he didn't tell him to "pray on." He stopped the prayer, as we see from his answer: "And now why tarriest thou? Arise, and be baptized, and wash away thy sins, calling on the name of the Lord." (Acts 22:16). He was not told to believe or to repent, as he had already done these. But he was told to "be baptized and wash away thy sins." This was what remained for him to do, and as it was the only thing Ananias told him to do, it was what he must do, for that is what Jesus said would be told him. If you listen to uninspired preachers of many denominations, you will not accept this. But if you listen to what inspired men say, you will accept it without question.

**Conclusion**

We must take the combined testimony of these cases to get all the truth on this question. When the apostles answered the question for unbelievers, they told them to believe. When they answered believers, they told them to repent and be baptized. When they answered penitent believers, they told them to be baptized. And a confession of faith before baptism was always in order (Acts 8:36-37). The inspired answer to our question, therefore, is that men must believe, repent, confess Christ, and be baptized.